

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 13691

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: CSCE, UR, US, BU, CZ, GE, HU, PL, RO
SUBJECT: NEW CSCE APPROACHES TO SOVIET UNION AND EAST
EUROPEAN STATES

REF: STATE 120984

1. EMBASSY CONSIDERS THAT THE CURRENT STATE OF U.S.-
SOVIET RELATIONS ARE SUCH AS TO ARGUE AGAINST MAKING A
NEW CSCE APPROACH TO THE SOVIET UNION AT THIS TIME. IT
HAS BEEN EIGHTEEN MONTHS SINCE OUR LAST PRESENTATION
OF THIS TYPE, AND FIFTEEN MONTHS SINCE THE SOVIET
RESPONSE. AFTER SUCH A LONG HIATUS, WE BELIEVE THE
REINSTITUTION OF THE DIALOGUE, SUCH AS IT MAY BE,
SHOULD AWAIT A MORE PROPITIOUS MOMENT IN OUR RELATIONS.
IN THE PAST WE HAVE HAD, AT BEST, A DIFFICULT TIME
TRYING TO BALANCE THE POSITIVE AND THE NEGATIVE AND
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TO GIVE EQUAL WEIGHT TO ALL THREE BASKETS IN MAKING
OUR PRESENTATIONS. DESPITE OUR EFFORTS THE SOVIETS
HAVE CHARGED US WITH OVEREMPHASIZING SHORTCOMINGS AND
BASKET THREE ISSUES. AT THIS JUNCTURE THE PROBLEM
WILL BE MAGNIFIED.

2. WE ARE JUST FINISHED WITH THE ORLOV TRIAL AND

AWAITING THE GINZBURG AND SHCHARANSKIY TRIALS, THE SOVIET CRACKDOWN ON DISSIDENTS HAS INCREASED AND THE FRUSTRATION OF THE REFUSENIKS HAS HEIGHTENED, THE MCCLELLAN CASE REMAINS. OUR JOURNALISTS HAVE CAUSE FOR COMPLAINT (E.G., PULLING THE TV PLUG DURING THE SECRETARY'S VISIT HERE), AND CONCERN THAT THEY MAY BE IMPLICATED IN THE COMING TRIALS. INDEED ONLY A SLIGHT INCREASE IN EMIGRATION FIGURES IS THE MOST POSITIVE POINT TO BE RAISED IN BASKET THREE ISSUES.

3. WE ARE ALSO IN A HOLDING PATTERN WITH RESPECT TO THE STATUS OF MILITARY EXCHANGES AND VISITS, WITH A GOOD PROSPECT OF MORE DELAY BEFORE THIS MATTER IS WORKED OUT. WE WOULD HAVE TO MENTION THE SOVIET TURNDOWN OF THE WAR COLLEGE EXCHANGE AND THEY WOULD PROBABLY RESPOND WITH A COMPLAINT ABOUT THE LACK OF U.S. RESPONSE TO THEIR PROPOSAL ON THE SENIOR OFFICER EXCHANGE. ON THE PLUS SIDE THERE IS THE FACT THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE FINALLY INVITED U.S. MILITARY OBSERVERS TO ONE OF THEIR EXERCISES, BUT EVE IN THIS CASE WE WOULD HAVE TO MENTION THAT THE RESTRICTIONS ON THE OBSERVERS WAS, IN OUR OPINION, EXCESSIVE.

4. ALL OF THE ABOVE ADDRESSES ONLY THE DIRECTLY CSCE RELATED ISSUES WHICH WOULD TEND TO CAST A PALL OVER THE PRESENTATION AND GIVE IT EVEN MORE OF A NEGATIVE CONFIDENTIAL

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CONTENT THAN IN THE PAST. BUT, APART FROM THIS THERE ARE NUMEROUS NASTY PROBLEMS (SUCH AS CHARGES AND COUNTER-CHARGES OF SPYING, THE ARREST OF AN AMERICAN BUSINESS-MAN AND OTHER MATTERS), THAT, WE THINK, SHOULD BE SETTLED OR LEFT TO COOL DOWN BEFORE WE AGAIN APPROACH THE SOVIETS AND ATTEMPT TO ENGAGE THEM IN A "CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE." THE PROSPECTS FOR A POSITIVE SOVIET RESPONSE AT THIS POINT ARE NOT HIGH.

5. FURTHERMORE, WE THINK THAT WE SHOULD CONSIDER WHETHER WE WOULD BE GIVING A FALSE, OR CONFUSING, SIGNAL TO THE SOVIETS IF WE GO TO THEM NOW AND SUGGEST THAT A ROUTINE OR REGULAR DIALOGUE CAN BE INSTITUTED DESPITE THE MANY, SERIOUS POLICY DIFFERENCES WHICH EXIST. IT WOULD NOT BE TO OUR ADVANTAGE EITHER TO IGNORE THESE ISSUES IN OUR PRESENTATION, OR TO DEPRECIATE THEIR IMPORTANCE BY TREATING THEM SUMMARILY ALONG WITH THE MANY LESSER ISSUES WHICH WOULD HAVE TO BE MENTIONED.

6. HAD THE OVERALL ATMOSPHERE IMPROVED FOLLOWING THE GROMYKO VISIT TO WASHINGTON, A CASE MAY HAVE BEEN MADE FOR GOING AHEAD WITH AN APPROACH DESPITE

SERIOUS DIFFERENCES IN THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES.
HOWEVER, IT WOULD SEEM BETTER TO US TO SPEND THE
SUMMER MONTHS TRYING TO WORK OUT SOME OF THE SERIOUS
DIFFERENCES AND TO APPROACH THE SOVIETS IN THE
AUTUMN, WHEN RELATIONS MIGHT BE ON THE UPSWING.
TO GO IN NOW WITH A DEMARCHE WOULD, WE BELIEVE, CONDEMN
THE DIALOGUE TO SUDDEN DEATH THROUGH AN INITIAL,
STRONG, NEGATIVE SOVIET REACTION AND THE LIKELIHOOD
OF EITHER NO FORMAL REPLY OR AN OVERLY CONTENTIOUS
ONE. TOON

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